

South African children return to school - with a water supply

By Claire Lomax

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CHILDREN at the Mnyakanya School in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, have returned to school with water thanks to the Menston-based Bambisanani Partnership charity.

The school had not been able to return after the Coronavirus lockdown due to having no water supply. Students and staff were unable to adhere to safety and hygiene procedures such as washing hands and equipment.

The three main UK-based partners of the charity - St Mary's School at Menston, The University of Leeds and Leeds Trinity University - wasted no time in setting about raising the necessary funds to reconnect water and also to improve the plumbing at the school, particularly the number of taps that students have access to.

Fundraising events from on-line quiz nights to the ongoing sponsored run/walk/cycle the equivalent distance from Yorkshire to South Africa, have been enhanced

by generous donations from Bambisanani supporters.

The Bambisanani Partnership is absolutely thrilled to announce that it has worked in collaboration with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education and that jointly the funding has been found - the water subsequently connected and the students have returned to school.

Principal, Mrs Thulile Mzhize, said: "We are lost for words to express our grateful thanks and joy at being able to return to school; we have hope again."

Mrs Pk Zondi, Bambisanani Coordinator at Mnyakanya School, added: "Thank you to everyone at the Bambisanani Partnership for all the hard work that has allowed Mnyakanya to reopen because we now have water at the school.

"The learners and educators are now back in school - there is much excitement!

"Please pass on our sincere thanks to all the Bambisanani team and supporters for making this happen and happen so quickly."

The Chair of Governors at



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the school Mr Sguda Bhengu passed on sincere thanks from the governing body to the partnership for restoring the water supply to the school, adding: "We still face the Covid-19 pandemic but the water supply means that washing and hygiene will no longer be a problem."

David Geldart, Founder and Chair of the Bambisanani Partnership, said: "To resolve this problem has been a

tremendous team effort.

"Very quickly we were able to liaise with the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education to agree a '50/50' funding package that would connect Mnyakanya School to the water supply. Our special thanks must go to Dr David Chonco, Tony Moodley, Priscilla Guliwe and all at Mnyakanya School and the wider community for their commitment to this project.

"Thanks also to all the Bambisanani Trustees who worked tirelessly to make this happen.

"Last but not least, a special tribute must be paid to our other Bambisanani team members and supporters who were so swiftly into action with fund raising."

Fundraising will continue for phase two of the project which is about improving the plumbing at the school.